

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 203
By Harper

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend the women who have served in the Tennessee General Assembly.

WHEREAS, the first woman served in a state legislature in the United States in 1895; and, since then, Tennessee has been blessed by the honorable and astute service of the 66 women who have served as members of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the first woman to serve in our state Senate was Ann Lee Keys Worley, who was elected to fill the unexpired term of her late husband; she gracefully represented Sullivan and Hawkins counties from 1921-1923; and

WHEREAS, Senator Worley passed landmark legislation, including the act "Removing Disabilities From Women" and making females eligible to hold any public office in Tennessee; she authored the Mother's Pension Bill and was on occasion designated by the Senate Speaker to preside over the body's deliberations; and

WHEREAS, Marian Scudder Griffin, the first woman to serve in the Tennessee House of Representatives, was elected in 1923 to represent Shelby County; and

WHEREAS, serving from 1923-1925, Representative Griffin successfully passed legislation to allow women to practice law in our State, and subsequently, she was the first female attorney admitted to the practice of law in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Anne M. Davis served in the House from 1925 to 1927 representing Knox County, and is known as the “Mother of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park”; she initiated the effort to create the park, passed legislation for the State to purchase the first tract of land, and sought appropriated money for purchasing additional land; and

WHEREAS, Sarah Ruth Frazier of Hamilton County served in the House from 1927 to 1929, after working with the Tennessee Equal Suffrage Association and the League of Women Voters for ratification of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Lillian Neblitt Scott served in the House from 1951 through 1957, represented Shelby and Tipton counties from 1957-1959 in the Senate, and served as Chair of the Senate Education Committee; and

WHEREAS, Senator Scott was later appointed Commissioner of Welfare after which tenure she served as Commissioner of Employment Security; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Dorothy Lavinia Brown was elected to the House in 1967 to represent Davidson County; she was the first African-American woman elected to the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, serving until 1969, Representative Brown also had a distinguished medical career as the first African-American woman to practice general surgery in the South; and

WHEREAS, Anna Belle Clement O'Brien served as a member of the House of Representatives from 1975-1977; she subsequently represented District 12 in the Senate, and during her tenure in the Senate, she exercised extraordinary leadership as Majority Floor Leader, Democrat Majority Caucus Chair, and as the Chair of the Transportation and Education committees; and

WHEREAS, Sharon J. Bell, a former judge of Knoxville's General Sessions Court and presently Chancellor of Tennessee's 6th Judicial District, Part III, served with distinction in the House of Representatives from 1978-1982; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Powell Duer, who represented Cumberland and Rhea counties from 1981-1996, was the first woman to hold the position of House Republican Caucus Chair; and

WHEREAS, Karen R. Williams, who represented the 90th House District in Shelby County from 1983-1994, went on to serve as Tennessee's Deputy Commissioner of Personnel; and

WHEREAS, each of the 66 women who have served in the Tennessee General Assembly have distinguished themselves and our State with their meritorious efforts, enhancing every area of state government; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should honor and recognize the distinguished female legislators in our great State and express to them our gratitude for their outstanding service, significant contributions, and selfless sacrifice; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor, recognize, commemorate, and thank the following women for their service in the Tennessee General Assembly:

Mrs. Jerry "Tommye" Agee; Mary M. Anderson; Martha H. Ashe; Mae Beavers; Sharon Joyce Bell; Diane Black; Marsha Blackburn; Kathryn I. Bowers; Henri E. Brooks; Dr. Dorothy L. Brown; Dr. Tommie F. Brown; Wilma Harrison Brown; Charlotte Burks; Jan Sullivan Bushing; Stephanie H. Chivers; Carol J. Chumney; Sandra Clark; Barbara W. Cooper; Norma J. Crow; Anne M. Davis, deceased; Betty Coulter Davis, deceased; Lois M. DeBerry; Frances Doyle, deceased; Maria Peroulas Draper; Shirley Powell Duer; Mary Ann Eckles; Gwen Fleming; Sarah Ruth Frazier, deceased; Pamela A. Gaia; Jo Ann Graves; Dolores R. Gresham; Marian Griffin, deceased; Jamie Hagood; Thelma M. Harper; Beth Halteman Harwell; Joyce Barnett Hassell;

Mabel W. Hughes, deceased; Sherry Stoner Jones; Peggy Steed Knight; Rosalind Kurita; Edith Taylor Langster; Mildred Louella Lashlee, deceased; Joan Lowe; Susan Lynn; Kim McMillan; Lizzie Lea Miller, deceased; Ruth C. Montgomery; Anna Belle Clement O'Brien; Ruth Webb Odell, deceased; Mae Stamey Owenby; Dana E. Moore; Mary J. Pruitt; Carol Rice; Ruth M. Robinson; Donna Rowland; Mrs. C. Frank Scott, deceased; Mary Merrill Shadow; Katherine Chesney Shook; Janis Baird Sontany; Joan F. Strong; Maude Tucker Taylor, deceased; Edna Tullos; Brenda K. Turner; Karen R. Williams; Robbie Wolfe; and Ann Lee Worley, deceased.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final resolving clause deleted from such copies.